

REMARKS

The Section 103 Rejections of Claims 1-3, 9, 12-15 and 19-22

Claims 1-3, 9, 12-15 and 19-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sridhar, U.S. Patent No. 5,778,118 ("Sridhar"), in view of Park et al., U.S. Publication No. 2002/067526 ("Park"). Applicants respectfully disagree and traverse these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Each of claims 1-3, 9, 12-15 and 19-22 require, among other things, either a method or a node which selectively blocks the optical channels not being added so that only optical channels that have been previously dropped at an add/drop node are passed on to the transmission path.

Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Sridhar and Park do not suggest the above stated feature of claims 1-3, 9, 12-15 and 19-22 because such a combination would render one or both of these references unsatisfactory for their intended purposes. In column 7, lines 15-19 of Sridhar, it is stated that "an arbitrary number of optical channels may be added to its optical system; the wavelengths of the optical channels do not need to correspond to the wavelengths of the channels blocked by the optical filter 40." In contrast, Park requires that the optical channels being added correspond to the optical wavelengths which have been previously dropped (see paragraph 0042; "the optical signal having the wanted wavelength can be

dropped from and added to a specific node, in a bi-directional optical transmission system..."). In sum, one of ordinary skill in the art on reading the disclosures of Sridhar and Park would not be motivated to combine the two because to do so would at least render Park unsatisfactory for its intended purpose; Park would not be able to add any arbitrary number of optical channels as is required by the disclosure of Sridhar.

Applicants also acknowledge the statement in the Office Action indicating that "Sridhar does not clearly show a second wavelength blocking element for selectively blocking the optical channels not being added so that only optical channels being added at the add/drop node are passed along in the add transmission path." For at least the reasons stated above, Applicants submit that neither Sridhar nor Park, taken separately or in combination, suggests the subject matter of the inventions in claims 1-3, 9, 12-15 and 19-22. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the pending rejections and allowance of these claims.

The Section 103 Rejections of Claims 4-8, 10, 11 and 16-18

Applicants respectfully submit that these claims depend on independent claim 1 or 13 and therefore are patentable over the combination of Sridhar and Park in further view of Thomas for the reasons stated above with respect to claims 1 and 13.

Applicants also acknowledge the statement made in the Office Action which indicates that "the combination system of Sridhar and Park fails to show an interleaver for separating the WDM input signal into at least [a] first and second group of optical signals so that optical channels in each of the first and second groups are spaced apart by at least one wavelength within their respective groups."

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 4-8, 10, 11 and 16-18 are patentable over the combination of Sridhar and Park in further view of Thomas. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the pending rejections and allowance of claims 4-8, 10, 11 and 16-18.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact John E. Curtin at the telephone number of the undersigned below.

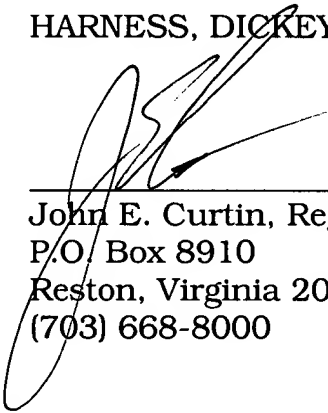
In the event this Response does not place the present application in condition for allowance, applicant requests the Examiner to contact the undersigned at (703) 668-8000 to schedule a personal interview.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By



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